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Weekly Bulletin

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Accidents Claim Many Lives

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There were 5059 accidental deaths in California in 1932. Of these, 3684 were in men and 1375 were in women. Almost half of all accidental deaths in the State last year were in motor vehicle accidents and nearly one quarter of the total number were due to accidents in the home. There were 1126 public accidents not due to motor vehicles. This includes railroads, street cars, water and air transportation, falls, drowning, firearms, and other related causes. There were but 361 industrial accidents. The comparatively small number of industrial accidents indicates the remarkable progress that has been made through the provision of safety regulations and their enforcement in the industries.

Industrial Deaths

Of the 361 deaths in the industries, there were but three among women and 358 among men. Agriculture, construction, transportation, trade, mining and quarrying claim most of these industrial lives. The industrial deaths are analyzed as follows:

Agriculture	67
Construction	53
Transportation and Public Utilities	47
Trade	41
Mining and Quarrying	39
Other extractive industries	20
Manufacturing	20
Clerical and Professional	8
Other occupational accidents	66

Accidents in the Home

Of the 1225 accidents in the home, 650 were in women and 575 in men. More than half of these deaths were due to falls. More than 20 per cent were due to burns, scalds and explosions. More than 10 per cent were due to asphyxiation and suffocation; more than 8 per cent to poisons, and 3½ per cent to firearms. The deaths from accidents in the home may be segregated as follows:

Falls	624
Burns, scalds and explosions	250
Asphyxiation and suffocation	28
Poisons	99
Firearms	43
Other home accidents	81

Nearly half of all deaths from home accidents were in individuals more than 65 years of age and most of these were due to falls. Unofficial records indicate that most of these falls occur on stairs and steps. Since most of them occur in elderly people, it appears that special safeguards would be needed to prevent such deaths. Very few individuals under 45 years of age meet with fatal accidents due to falls in the home. On the other hand, most deaths from burns and most deaths from asphyxiation and suffocation occur in children who are under fifteen years of age. The greatest number of accidental deaths due to firearms occurs in children between the ages of 5 and 14 and most deaths from all accidental causes occur in children from 1 to 4 years of age. There is significance in the fact that 18.3 per cent of all fatal home accidents occurred, last year, in children who were under 15 years of age. Burns and scalds are also fatal to persons of advanced age. It would appear that more efficient safeguards in the prevention of accidental deaths from firearms, poison, burns, asphyxiation and suffocation are needed for children under 15 years of age. All of these deaths may be classed as preventable and it is unfortunate that so many children's lives should be sacrificed needlessly to these preventable causes.

Motor Vehicle Deaths

This is the most important among all accidental deaths. The lot of the pedestrian in motor vehicle deaths is hazardous, as most deaths in this group occurred in collisions of motor vehicles with pedestrians. There were 823 such deaths last year, as compared with 658 deaths which occurred in collisions between motor vehicles. Collisions of motor vehicles with railroad trains took 77 lives, with electric cars 58, with bicycles 31, with horse-drawn vehicles three, and collision with fixed objects claimed 129 lives. The third most important cause in motor vehicle deaths were deaths that were not due to collisions, 568 lives having been taken in motor vehicle accidents due to overturning, running into ditches, and other causes related to speeding and loss of control of vehicles. Out of the total of 2347 motor vehicle deaths last year, 1783 were in men and 564 in women.

The greatest number of deaths in motor vehicle accidents occurred among individuals between the ages of 15 and 24. These deaths occurred in collisions with other motor vehicles and in noncollision accidents. On the other hand, most of the individuals who lost their lives in collisions of motor vehicles with pedestrians were persons more than 65 years of age. Two hundred seventy-nine such individuals lost their lives last year in such collisions.

It would appear, then, that elderly pedestrians as a group constitute the greatest hazard in motor vehicle deaths. The next greatest hazard in such deaths is in the age groups from 15 to 34, most of which deaths occur in collisions between motor vehicles and in noncollision accidents. There is further significance in the fact that more than half of all motor vehicle deaths last year (1210) were in individuals who were gainfully employed.

Public Accidents

Drowning is important among public accidents, as 338 individuals lost their lives through drowning last year. Next in importance is falls in public places, 218 individuals having lost their lives in such accidents last year. The numbers of deaths in 1932 in other public accidents are as follows:

Railroad	102
Air transportation	72
Water transportation	67
Street car	64
Other vehicles	9
Firearms	56
Burns, scalds and explosions	25

Among public accidents due to falls, individuals more than 65 years of age again present the greatest hazard. There were 74 deaths due to this cause among such individuals last year. Street car accidents also claimed a large number of deaths among individuals who are more than 65 years of age. Most deaths from drowning, on the other hand, occur among individuals who are under 25 years of age. There were 145 such deaths last year. A considerable number of deaths from drowning also occurred among individuals between the ages of 45 and 54, 64 such deaths having occurred last year. It would appear, then, that most deaths from drowning occur among young adults who take extreme hazards and among middle-aged individuals who probably over-estimate their ability to withstand the hazards incidental to swimming. Most deaths from accidents due to firearms occurred among individuals between 15 and 34 years of age.

An analysis of accidental deaths in California in 1932 indicates clearly that motor vehicles are responsible for most accidental deaths that occur. Falls in the home constitute the next chief factor in the production of accidental deaths, and drowning is third in importance among such deaths, followed by burns, scalds and explosions, and falls in public places. While it is true that nearly 25 per cent of all accidental deaths are among individuals past 65 years of age, the greatest numbers of such deaths occur among individuals who are in the prime of life. The continuance of safety campaigns and the adoption and enforcement of regulations in the prevention of accidental deaths would seem to be of first importance in the prevention of needless mortality due to these preventable causes.

The education of most people ends upon graduation; that of the physician means a lifetime of incessant study.—Marx.

RATS MENACE HEALTH AND WEALTH

Not only do rats carry disease, but they also cause enormous economic losses. These losses consist not only in destruction of foodstuffs, but in property damage as well. It has been determined that there are more rats than people in the United States. There is at least one rat for every resident in American cities, and in the rural district there are several rats for each resident. In grain producing areas there is a relatively higher rat population.

It has been determined, furthermore, that a rat will consume fifty pounds of grain a year and will damage a much larger amount. One-half cent a day is a conservative estimate of the cost of the damage done by each rat. This amounts to nearly $2 a year for each rat, a total of at least $180,000,000 annually in the United States.

Among the edible products consumed by rats are the following: grain, vegetables, fruits, eggs, poultry (especially young chickens), bakery goods, grocery supplies, meats, flowers, bulbs, and countless other commodities.

Leather goods, books, clothing, fabrics, and paper are commonly destroyed by rats for use in building their nests. They are able to gnaw through lead pipe and other soft metal products. Disastrous fires are frequently caused by rats gnawing matches or wires carrying electric current.

The principal disease carried by rats is plague. They also carry paratyphoid fever, trench fever which was commonly encountered in the World War, and other less common diseases. Rats are also subject to an extremely wide variety of diseases which are considered as present in these rodents only; some of them, however, may bear a relationship to diseases found in human beings.

The following standard measures are commonly used in the destruction of rats:

1. The protection or removal of rat food.
2. The killing of rats by poison and traps.
3. The removal of material which permits a refuge for rats.
4. The remodeling of all nonratproof buildings.
5. Closure of all openings in existing ratproof buildings.
6. Erection of ratproof buildings only.

Where education has been entirely neglected or improperly managed, we see the worst passions ruling with uncontrolled and incessant sway. Good sense degenerates into craft, and anger rankles into malignity. Restraint, which is thought most salutary, comes too late, and the most judicious admonitions are urged in vain.—S. Parr.

RATPROOFING OF BUILDINGS IS IMPORTANT

Neither trapping nor poisoning nor the combination of the two will alone rid premises of rats. Only ratproofing of a permanent character will eliminate the rat from buildings.

Usually, we have to deal with three varieties of rats, (1) Mus norvegicus, known as the brown, wharf or Norway rat. He is a burrower and usually makes his home in, or in close proximity to the ground, being most commonly found inhabiting ground areas of buildings, and beneath floors. (2) The Mus rattus, the English black rat, and (3) the Mus alexandrinus, the Egyptian or roof rat. The latter two species are about the same size, and are smaller than the Norway rat. They show preference for upper floors and are able to live between ceilings, in walls and on roofs. They are remarkable climbers, their agility permitting them to pass from roof to roof by telephone and electric wires or other means, and their great trap shyness and cunning render them more difficult of control than their larger relative.

In the presence of the unchecked Norway rat, comparatively few black or roof rats may be found inhabiting basements and ground floors. They are generally acceded to be the most common ship-borne rat; they are by far the most common form trapped on ships visiting the Pacific coast from foreign ports.

These differences in the natural habitat being appreciated, it will be seen that any plan for the elimination of the rat must contemplate the ratproofing of the building from the basement to the roof.

The simplest form of ratproofing for small structures or dwellings of temporary nature is to raise the first floor 18 inches off the ground and leave the space beneath open on three sides, and keep area beneath building free from rubbish.

One of the most important lessons that we should appreciate is the great complexity and the vast scope of the field of public health. It is not a definite science but comprises a great body of knowledge about as broad as experimental science itself. For that reason the study of public health should be excellently adapted for general educational purposes. In this field, not only are the fundamentals of practically every laboratory science applied, but here is ample opportunity for the study of classics, the humanities, social problems and economics; for all civilizations have been profoundly influenced by problems of health and disease.—D. J. Davis, *Illinois Medical Journal,* November, 1929.

MORBIDITY*

Diphtheria

29 cases of diphtheria have been reported, as follows: Oakland 1, Los Angeles County 6, Beverly Hills 1, Glendale 1, Glendora 1, Huntington Park 1, Los Angeles 12, San Gabriel 1, Riverside 1, San Diego 1, San Francisco 1, Paso Robles 1, Mountain View 1.

Chickenpox

583 cases of chickenpox have been reported. Those communities reporting 10 or more cases are as follows: Berkeley 21, Oakland 45, Fresno County 13, Fresno 12, Los Angeles County 47, Los Angeles 64, Pasadena 13, Merced 26, Orange County 15, Riverside 12, Ontario 14, National City 10, San Diego 45, San Francisco 66, San Joaquin County 26, Stockton 10, Santa Barbara County 11.

Measles

1274 cases of measles have been reported. Those communities reporting 10 or more cases are as follows: Oakland 18, Martinez 45, Kern County 10, Los Angeles County 166, Beverly Hills 10, Compton 23, Culver City 16, Glendale 15, Huntington Park 23, Inglewood 19, Long Beach 30, Los Angeles 360, Monrovia 30, Pasadena 52, Pomona 13, San Fernando 13, San Gabriel 11, Santa Monica 63, Whittier 19, Lynwood 10, Orange County 41, Huntington Beach 21, Santa Ana 21, Riverside County 16, Riverside 44, San Bernardino 10, San Diego County 36, San Diego 10.

Scarlet Fever

125 cases of scarlet fever have been reported. Those communities reporting 10 or more cases are as follows: Los Angeles County 10, Los Angeles 48.

Whooping Cough

415 cases of whooping cough have been reported. Those communities reporting 10 or more cases are as follows: Alameda 11, Berkeley 23, Oakland 23, Los Angeles County 26, Los Angeles 66, Pasadena 14, Sacramento 46, San Diego County 23, San Diego 17, San Francisco 40, Santa Clara County 11.

Smallpox

17 cases of smallpox have been reported, as follows: Los Angeles County 3, Long Beach 1, Los Angeles 10, Santa Monica 1, Ontario 1, Mountain View 1.

Typhoid Fever

7 cases of typhoid fever have been reported, as follows: Contra Costa County 1, Alhambra 1, Los Angeles 1, Riverside County 1, San Bernardino County 3.

Meningitis (Epidemic)

5 cases of epidemic meningitis have been reported, as follows: Los Angeles County 1, Los Angeles 1, Santa Ana 1, San Francisco 1, Burlingame 1.

Poliomyelitis

2 cases of poliomyelitis have been reported, as follows: Bakersfield 1, Los Angeles 1.

Encephalitis (Epidemic)

One case of epidemic encephalitis from San Joaquin County has been reported.

Trichinosis

5 cases of trichinosis from San Francisco have been reported.

Food Poisoning

8 cases of food poisoning have been reported as follows: Los Angeles County 5, Los Angeles 2, Orange County 1.

Tularemia

One case of tularemia, source of infection State of Nevada, has been reported.

Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever

One case of Rocky Mountain spotted fever, source of infection State of Nevada, has been reported.

The world acclaims the creative genius of all those who serve humanity by their great achievements in this age of material things. There is an essential simplicity about all great achievements. So much so that because of its very simplicity, full recognition of its value is unfortunately sometimes lacking. And so it is with the simple and marvelous accomplishment of being a mother to a child. The greatest of all spiritual and material achievements is motherhood, because it creates and builds life itself. It fosters genius and offers the greatest opportunity to serve mankind.—Walter A. Strong.

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* From reports received on June 12th and 13th for week ending June 10th.

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